

THE SOLFED INTRODUCTION TO

WORKFARE

WORKFARE IS NOT ABOUT UNEMPLOYMENT, IT'S ABOUT WAGES

Workfare is the name for schemes where people are required to work for no wage. It's a hugely expensive policy that is part of the government's strategy to boost business by cutting labour costs: it means providing companies with free workers so they no longer have to pay their existing staff, thereby reducing costs as well as the number of job vacancies. Some jobs are being cut altogether as companies substitute workfare placements for their paid staff. All of this works together to increase competition for jobs and pushes down wages across the board. Workfare is intended to undermine everybody's pay and job security and these reforms are permanent so it affects you whether or not you're working at the moment.

WORKFARE WON'T HELP THE UNEMPLOYED

Of course, the government doesn't present workfare in this light: they claim that these schemes are about helping people into work even though their own research states that: *"there is little evidence that workfare increases the likelihood of finding work. It can even reduce employment chances by limiting the time available for job search and by failing to provide the skills and experience valued by employers."*

WORKFARE IS COMING FOR YOUR JOBS

In the UK there are five workfare schemes targeting unemployed and disabled people: the Jobcentre's Work Experience scheme, Sector-based Work Academies, Mandatory Work Activity, the Work Programme and the Community Action Programme. The government has effectively declared that people no longer deserve to be paid for doing a job.

Already, frontline NHS workers have been replaced with unpaid workfare. Factories have been closed down and reopened elsewhere with unpaid workfare staff. Companies such as Argos, Poundland, Superdrug and Tesco have cut overtime for existing staff and reduced recruitment as their work is now done for nothing by unemployed people.

IN WORK OR OUT OF WORK, WORKFARE IS BAD FOR US ALL

So far our campaign of direct action has led Holland & Barrett to withdraw from workfare and other companies to distance themselves from it. But the fight is a lot bigger - if we are to defeat the government's workfare agenda and the bosses' attack on our pay and conditions we need a mass movement against it. If you've been on workfare or if you'd like to get involved in the fight against it, please contact us.

For info on the campaign see: bit.ly/SFworkfare
or for more on the workfare schemes see our guide:
bit.ly/workfareguide



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